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SUBJECT: GHANA PRESIDENT CELEBRATES EMANCIPATION DAY IN T&T

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¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: President of Ghana John Agyekum Kufuor visited Port of Spain July 31-August 1 to participate in Trinidad and Tobago's Emancipation Day events. The GOTT laid out the red carpet, with Prime Minister Manning, Foreign Affairs Minister Paula Gopee-Scoon and the bulk of the rest of the cabinet greeting the Ghanaian leader upon arrival. A State Dinner and several cultural events featured Kufuor. Partly a celebration of African-tradition, Emancipation Day led to calls for stronger family ties and a greater focus on African relations. END SUMMARY

¶2. (U) Kufuor had a busy schedule, featuring prominently in all dailies and television newscasts. Among events, he spoke at an Emancipation dinner hosted by the National Association for the Empowerment of African People (NAEAP). In that speech, he paid homage to the contributions made by Trinidadians Dr. Eric Williams, George Padmore and others to the Pan-African movement that led to the independence of Ghana from Britain in 1957. In addition to Port of Spain, Kufuor also visited T&T's second largest town San Fernando, meeting the Mayor and other local dignitaries while headlining Emancipation Day events there. The highlight of the visit was a large State Dinner held in Kufuor's honor. In the course of the visit, Manning described the Ghanaian President as a "distinguished and respected man," with Kufuor returning the favor by saying T&T "couldn't have a better politician" as its eader.

¶3. (U) Manning did not let Kufuor leave mpty handed. He promised to send T&T's National teel Symphony Orchestra to Ghana, but more imporantly pledged to include that nation in a group ofseven West African countries to whom Trinidad wil provide its energy expertise. Specifying, Mannng said the aid will include assistance with orgaizing oil and gas "management structures"and tax regimes. The University of Trinidad and Tobago also will open some slots for students from Ghana at its petroleum institute.

¶4. (SBU) Comment: Though a mostly cultural and historical event, and received as such by the vast majority of Trinbagonians, there were occasional political overtones to Emancipation Day. Kufuor's praise of Manning, though not extreme when placed in context, caught some eyes. End Comment.

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